

College Gardens Comment Form Questions

1. Will a softball field be located close by?

The College Gardens Elementary School project includes a softball field located diagonally across the existing multi-sports with home plate near the school and the outfield crossing into the City's park.

2. Will neighbors have input on the design elements and plantings?

Yes, the City will seek public comment on many detail design elements of the park, including the type of benches, lighting, playground equipment; plant materials, shelter and pond overlook structures.

3. Will the forebay be cleaned often?

The new forebay is designed to collect trash before it enters the main pond and the Watts Branch stream. This will necessitate periodic cleaning of the forebay, particularly after large storm events. The City has a contractor on call to remove trash from other SWM facilities in the City. The contractor is expected to visit the SWM pond every 2 weeks for the first several months to gauge the necessary frequency of trash removal. The City is committed to keeping the pond clean.

4. Will drinking fountains be installed in the park?

Water fountains are not planned for the park.

5. Could signs be installed to remind people not to block driveways?

Generally, the City tries to limit the number of signs in neighborhoods. If the problem of blocked driveways persists, the City can work with neighbors to explore options such as enforcement.

6. Will the rain garden be preserved?

Yes, the new rain garden will be left undisturbed.

7. Will the sledding hill be preserved?

Yes, the sledding hill was rated by the neighborhood as the 8th most desired park amenity. It will not be changed by this park/pond project or by the finished elementary school. During school construction, the open space for sledding may be limited. The City is working to maximize that space while maintaining safety for sledders.

8. Who pays for this project?

If the Mayor and Council vote to fund the project, the City's Stormwater Management Fund will fund the proposed pond. The Stormwater Management Fund's revenue currently comes from developer permit fees and monetary contributions, as well as interest income and grants. The park redesign and improvements will be funded by the Capital Improvements Project Fund, which is paid for with tax dollars.

9. Will mosquito population increase in the park or throughout the neighborhood?

The City expects the pond to have fewer mosquitoes than the current pond. A fountain is included in the proposed design, and ponds with moving water are not good breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The pond will have more wetland plants and an aquatic ecosystem to support other insects, amphibians and birds that eat mosquitoes. The City monitors mosquito larvae populations in all City-maintained ponds.

10. How will surrounding homes be protected from flooding?

The City's consulting engineers have designed the dam to keep floodwaters from inundating anyone's house to the side or below the pond. The pond will not take all the runoff in the existing storm drainpipe that passes through the park – it will receive runoff from the smaller storms, and the larger storms will bypass the pond as necessary and go directly to the stream valley below Princeton Place.

11. Can waterlilies and cattails be added to the pond?

The final design pondscaping plan will specify which species of wetland plants will be installed around the edges of the pond. Cattails are a native species, but tend to take over ponds, so these will not be planted intentionally.

12. What is the timeframe for this project?

The project itself will take about one year to construct. The City will complete design details and obtain necessary local and state permits for the stormwater management pond, along with additional citizen input, before construction can begin. This will take about one year from the time the Mayor and Council authorize final design and project funding.

13. How will River Birches be protected from children peeling the bark?

The City has ordinances in place to keep people from harming plant and wildlife in the parks. Incidents of vandalism in parks are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. If the bark peeling becomes a problem and trees are being damaged, it may become necessary to replace the trees.

14. Can a grate be installed on the pipe that drains into the forebay to keep children from entering the pipes?

The final design of the pipe has not been determined. The City is working closely with our engineering consultants to design a pipe that is safe for pond and park users. At this point in the design process, it is not possible to say exactly what the pipe will look like. As we move forward with design, the City has made a commitment to the surrounding neighborhoods that we will work closely with the Task Force to design a pipe that addresses safety and continues to provide stormwater management.

15. Will the same type of benches be used?

No, the City prefers to use vinyl-coated steel benches that have a long life expectancy and repel graffiti. The City will seek public comment on many design elements of the park, including the type of benches used.

16. Can the maintenance road be narrowed?

The SWM pond access path from the shelter building to the pond does not need to be wider than about 10-12'. These roads are generally built with pervious pavers, such as "Grasscrete," which has a somewhat more natural appearance. This is an item that will be discussed with the Task Force during final design, and presented for public comment.